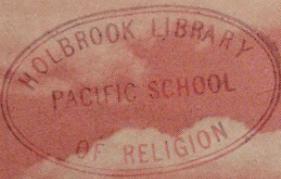


SOCIAL ACTION

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MAY 15, 1950



**CONSERVING AND DEVELOPING
OUR RESOURCES**

By Stephen Raushenbush

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Where Is Bread?

I have a friend who says there is really only one economic problem in the world: Where is bread and how can we get it? In a symbolic sense what he says is right. The economist would state it a bit more formally. He would likely say the economic problem is the problem of the allocation and use of scarce resources.

The sources that sustain human life and the life of society are very few in number. The farm, the forest, the fishery and the mine exhaust the list. From these four sources man by his labor and ingenuity has fabricated the material aspects of modern civilization. Without them nothing will live. Enough resources or energy have never been available to satisfy the desires of men. Hence the perpetual toil of farmers, woodsmen, fishermen and miners, and the perpetual struggle over the allocation of the products of industry.

Stephen Raushenbush, in this issue of *Social Action*, makes it abundantly clear that the problems involved in resource allocation, development and conservation go far beyond the technological and the economic. They include issues which penetrate deep into the moral order. They involve public policy and the fundamental values of general welfare, human rights, social justice and world peace. These are all matters of proper concern to the Christian and to the Church.

There are few Americans as well qualified as Stephen Raushenbush to deal constructively with this subject. He brings to it both a background of technical competence and a spirit that is sensitive to ethical issues. Mr. Raushenbush is a researcher for the Public Affairs Institute and editor of its "Bold New Program Series" exploring the ways to the welfare of two-thirds of the people of the world. He was for years an economist in the Department of the Interior, dealing first with coal, and then with electric power, mineral and river basin development. He was a member of the United Nations Preparatory Committee on the recent International Scientific Conference. He is now a member of an expert committee evaluating the costs of the Brannan Plan. He is author of *The Power Fight* and numerous other studies of various aspects of the resource problems he surveys so effectively in this issue.

—SHIRLEY E. GREENE

Mr. Greene is Agricultural Relations Secretary of the Council for Social Action.

Conserving and Developing Our Resources

Stephen Raushenbush

THE CHALLENGE OF RESOURCE USE

Kingdoms and classes have been shaped by patterns of resource use. Revolutions and wars have been caused by those patterns. How, and for whose benefit, a nation's resources are used is, in many ways, as important as the amounts of them that are available.

As recently as yesterday, the old land and money-lender system of China helped to shift that huge area out of the zone of potential political freedom. As early as tomorrow the use of the Ruhr's metals and fuels will help to determine whether the people of Germany will move toward greater political freedom or less.

The Significance of Resource Use

This is simply to say, first, that the way in which we conserve or develop our natural resources reflects our goals and values in life; second, that those ways help to stamp and fashion the kind of people we are. They affect our thinking about life, our feeling about other people, and ultimately our religious aspirations.

This is not hard to prove. One needs only to remember the spectacular breakdown of our patterns of resource use that became known as the great depression of the 1930's. Hate and suspicion embittered the lives of many. They felt less hopeful about the possibilities of freedom and democracy than in earlier and later years. Their reaction carried across the seas to Latin America, to Europe, to Asia, and weakened the faith and hope of millions.

Today, the people of two-thirds of the world have so meager a life that we are more amazed they endure it at all than that they revolt against it. Each man, woman and child in the United States averages about \$1,500 a year of income. Each person does not get that much, but the people of our whole nation

get it. In Asia, Africa and Latin America, on the other hand, the average is closer to \$75 a year, and of course, many do not get that much. Is it easy for those people to acquire a deep sense of brotherhood with us? Is it likely that they will feel that we are all worshipping the same God?

Before 1939 the three Axis powers had been having resource difficulties. To some extent all of them were industrialized nations and needed certain and secure foreign markets in order to sell what their factories produced, and to import food with the proceeds. In the 1930's trade dried up. Foreign markets were almost non-existent. On top of that, Italy, Japan and Germany received somewhat less in terms of food and raw materials for what they sold abroad than did the other exporting nations. This situation of a chaotic, disorganized economic world led each of them to center its national ambitions on its neighbors' resources. There were many other elements in each situation, but the insecurity of these nations' resource base and their markets played a leading part in taking them to war.

Not only in these war-making nations, but in all nations, people's thinking is fashioned in some part by the patterns of resource use in which they grow up. A slave economy at one time seemed desirable to the cotton and tobacco planters of the South. The heritages of that particular system of using human resources and land together survived for many years after slavery was ended. Similarly the early destruction of our forests, farmlands and oil wells led at first to apparent prosperity, success, good wages, and more investment funds. Most of us have grown up in that environment. We accepted the process much as the growing generations of the Scandinavian countries accepted the somewhat different systems of conservation and cooperatives. The current way of using resources was, in each case, the "common sense" way. Yet, different attitudes about many things seem to have come out of these two different resource patterns.

Churches Recognize Importance of Resource Use

The churches have recognized the importance of these matters for many years. Their leaders have known that the "ghost cities" created when forests were clear-cut and ruined brought havoc to the lives of their people in the lumbering industry. They knew that the hatred and intolerance in the Klan were deepest in the men from the stoniest fields and the most gullied pastures. They knew that the loosening of the old responsibilites when people moved to the cities was apt to go in tandem with loss of neighborliness.

Jesus of Nazareth used many illustrations from the land to help people understand his message. His speech was full of the trees that give forth corrupt fruit, tares in the wheat, men working in the vineyards, seeds scattered among thorns, men who reaped where they did not sow, and houses built on sand. He seemed impatient with those who failed to understand the doctrine of stewardship, the great concept that men have an obligation to use well all their capacities and everything that is entrusted to them. This, and the insistence upon the responsibility of the individual for the social consequences of his acts have become definite parts of our moral and intellectual world.

The churches have not always been the first to see the effect of certain resource patterns on their people's lives and characters. We have had some centuries in which poverty and maldistribution of wealth did not concern all our religious leaders, for the life on earth was considered of little importance in comparison to the after-life.

Fateful consequences attached to this attitude, and the great schism in Europe between the churches and the working people can in part be attributed to it, accompanied by the slogan that religion was the opium of the people. Some parts of that schism can be traced to resource patterns. When the great Luther took his amazing stand against the peasants' revolt on behalf of existing economic and political authority, he was

speaking for a Germany that had been pulled from high commercial levels by the opening of the route to India's resources. The influence of his position, whether intended by him or not, was toward a fateful dependence of the German churches on temporal authority.

The Christian churches did not originally spread the pleasant doctrine that no one had any real responsibility for what he did to resources or people with his accumulated capital. This doctrine came from other sources. It held that an unseen hand turned every act of money-making into the greatest possible good for everybody. The child slavery of the industrial revolution and the black slavery of colonial agriculture were justified in these terms, among others. Islam, in the Near East, justified inaction, misery and the degradation of the poor by its acceptance of the fatalistic "Allah wills all." The Western countries, similarly, while never justifying inaction, were also accepting misery and the degradation of the poor by their idea that the world's resources could be abused, monopolized or neglected, and that as long as the decisions about them were enlightened and self-interested (non-religious), they were bound to be satisfactory in the long run. Many churches accepted this idea for a while.

Positions of Contemporary Churches

In this century, however, the churches have awakened to the needs of man for material improvement as well as spiritual grace. Those who believe in the possibility of the Kingdom of God and brotherhood of all men on this earth want all of our institutions to reflect the Christian spirit. Even those who do not believe that either of these goals is possible, nevertheless accept the idea that material misery and the accompanying degradation of the human spirit are not necessary or desirable prerequisites for salvation.

The Federal Council of Churches has stated the following beliefs, at various times, bearing on resource use:

The churches should stand for practical application of the

Christian principles of social well-being to the acquisition and use of wealth, subordination of speculation and the profit motive to the motive of cooperative spirit.

Property represents a trusteeship under God, and should be held subject to the needs of the community.

Christians should be guided by their ethics to seek the economic institutions which will in a given set of circumstances serve most fully the three positive values of justice and order and freedom. This means that there must be a perpetual Christian struggle in behalf of whatever values are most neglected in the predominant economic institutions.

Christianity challenges the assumption that self-interest is the only sufficient motive to drive men to real achievement, and repudiates the pagan axiom that moral right must bow to economic necessity.

There are many other statements by church bodies which bear on this subject. The Universal Christian Church Conference at Stockholm in 1925 said:

Property must be regarded as a stewardship for which an account must be given to God.

The Amsterdam Assembly in 1948 said:

Christians should recognize with contrition that many churches are involved in the forms of economic injustice and racial discrimination which have created the conditions favorable to the growth of communism.¹

From the Detroit Conference of February, 1950 on the Church and Economic Life came a proposal which is now being recommended to the member churches for study and action. After stating that we seek a dynamic, free society, an orderly, just and fraternal one, it said:

We seek also a *productive* society in which our resources are efficiently utilized in the service of these values.

Our Christian responsibilities should be discharged both on the level of self-restrained individual action and also on the level of developing institutions, groups and an economic system which will give the individual the greatest opportunity to serve these values.

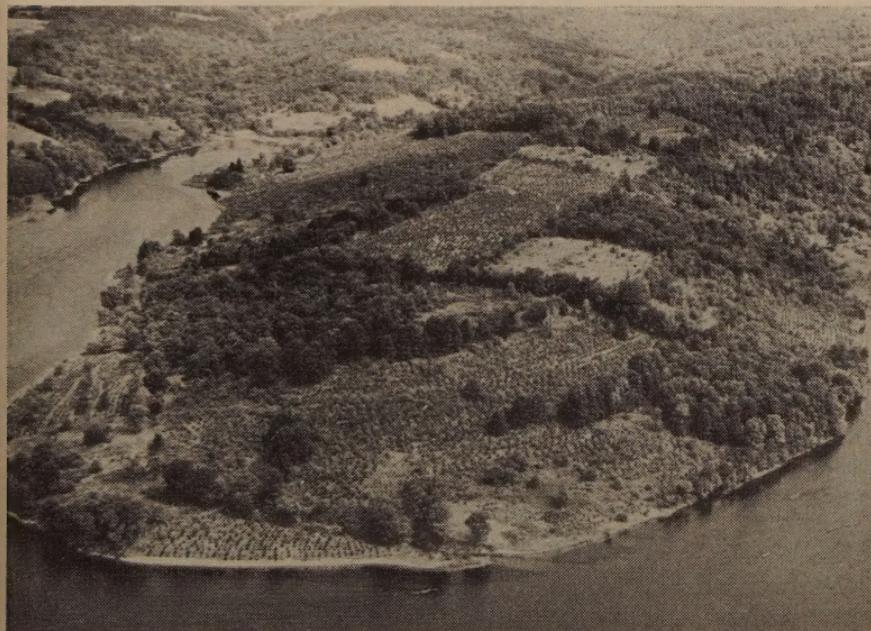
1. These quotations are from "The Churches Deal with Economic Issues," by Cameron P. Hall, Federal Council of Churches.

After a statement concerning the low-income groups in our economy, the report went on:

But we cannot achieve justice for these groups unless we find remedies for the basic causes of their poverty. The price policies pursued by various individuals, private groups, and government affect the degree of justice our society achieves, for price decisions greatly influence the effectiveness with which labor, capital, and land are used in enriching the lives of our people.²

These statements fully recognize the importance of the pattern of resource use in economic institutions, and of religiously motivated institutions in forwarding the welfare of

2. From "The Responsibility of Christians in an Interdependent Economic World," Federal Council of Churches, pp. 15, 16.



The Christian doctrine of stewardship insists upon the responsibility of the individual for the social consequences of his acts. Above, farmland run down through irresponsibility and abandoned is being reclaimed for society by a reforestation program. Contoured planting stretches along the slopes of neglected land.

the people. No man can ruin property without ultimately injuring others, whether it is by over-cutting his forest lands high in the hills and destroying the land or water supply in the valley miles below, or by using his property rights in industry to lower the standard of living for the many who must buy his products.

Both conservation and resource use are matters which fall clearly within the Christian and democratic concepts of stewardship, the responsibility of each individual for the social consequences of his acts of omission and commission. The churches have raised the fundamental question: what values are to be served by resource use and the economic institutions which arise from the various use patterns? They have asked that freedom, growth, order, justice and brotherhood be the ends sought by men and nations in using their resources.

Let us look first at our major resource problems. Then we can return to an examination of the values to be served in the solution of these problems.

OUR MAJOR RESOURCE PROBLEMS

1. *People*

The first of these problems, and one with deep moral implications, concerns the treatment of our human resources. The greatest wealth of the world is in its people. Without them, the natural resources would lie idle. Natural resources are to be used for the benefit of mankind. They are to give the maximum of comfort, health and enjoyment to the people. They are to be preserved so that no future generation will find the means of making and improving its livelihood shut off because others before it have exhausted or destroyed the base of economic life.

What are we doing with our human resources? In the United States and Canada people are getting a better physical life than they have ever had before, and probably a better one than anywhere else in the world. But we must add at once that there are conspicuous exceptions to our success story. For

a large group of families in this country—perhaps five million—living is still hand-to-mouth. The curse of disease and debt is heavy on their houses and the possibility of early death heavy on their children. Those who grow up never get the schooling that would develop their potentialities. Our Negro, Indian and Spanish-American children are in this group particularly. They must make their way against barriers of contempt and fear. If they fail to reach their human possibilities, or feel cheated and deprived throughout their lives, the nation and the world have not only lost great talents and services, but have created endless personal tragedies.

This loss of human resources is very crucial to a nation. Both Germany and France after 1919, it has been said with some truth, lost in war the men who would have given them leadership and helped avoid the disasters of later years for which the whole world suffered.

If a nation is to receive the best from its people, it must help create opportunities for them to develop fully. The class-bound societies of Europe never did that. Ours did, for a long time. But now technology, which is bringing great benefits, is also limiting and changing the amount and character of opportunity that is open to our young people. The new inventions involve more expensive plants and equipment. Few can now afford to enter the competitive industrial field. Bigness and concentrated industrial power are with us to stay. We have, in fact, become a nation of employees.

How can we help find opportunity for personal development and responsibility in this changed situation? How can we make man's employment spiritually rewarding? How can we help him contribute more to his fellow men than the physical production by which he earns his living?

As we look around us, we see some artificial limits on our community ability to draw forth the resources we need for our own good. The dim view which the medical colleges and associations take of the number of young men who should be

trained as doctors is one of these limits. The result is that many of our rural communities, particularly, are deprived of the medical services they might have. They are deprived of human resources which should have been developed, and we are all poorer because of it.

The waste of human resources in the less-developed parts of the world is even greater. In most of Asia, parts of Africa, and Latin America, millions die young. Food is inadequate. A good part of the family earnings is spent on children who will not live long enough to pay their meager way. Millions of people are weak from diseases of the stomach, skin and eyes. They can contribute little to their communities or to the world in physical energy. Their energies are consumed in the struggle for life; they can give little in intellectual or spiritual gifts. And they are shut off from us by their handicaps.

We cannot begin to think of brotherhood in the world as long as two-thirds of its men and women are spent and wasted in the process of simply staying alive.

2. *Surpluses*

As a nation, we must now decide whether to go on using our land resources fully or to limit their use. This is a major resource problem, and also a moral one.

During the post-war years we have been disturbed by the piling up of surpluses in government warehouses. The future should worry us far more, for we have not reached the peak of our productive potential. Farm production can go vastly beyond present levels. Hybrid varieties, new pesticides and fertilizers all act as substitutes for new land. Our surpluses can increase far faster than our population can consume them—even if income were distributed so that all our people could eat much more than they are now doing.

Part of our difficulty is due to the chaotic world situation. The European countries to whom our cotton, wheat and tobacco growers expected to sell, have few dollars with which to buy. They are being forced to grow these crops themselves, or in

their colonies, and that fact affects our future expectations. In addition, two-thirds of the world has so little industry or trade that it can afford to import very little food indeed, even when it has great hunger for it.

And what about our surpluses of perishables? People would eat more of them gladly if they were lower in price. But as the country's income grows, a smaller proportion will go for food. Even with larger incomes, people will hardly spend enough to use all the meat, butter, eggs, poultry, vegetables and fruits that can be produced. Greater equality of incomes in the country will help the farmers, but will not completely end the problem of surpluses.

Already the piled-up surpluses in government warehouses in early 1950 (costing about four billion dollars when acquired) are much beyond our national needs for an "ever normal granary," a protection against droughts and floods. They are also greatly beyond our needs for national defense. These stored surpluses are now primarily functioning to keep prices up.

What to do? One suggestion has been that these surpluses be given away to the poorer people of the world. We have done that in times of famine abroad. In addition the UNRRA and the early ECA programs involved large grants of our food and fiber surpluses. Another suggestion, coming from FAO, is that surplus producers such as the United States or their farmers should take soft, unconvertible currencies in return for their surpluses and hope that at some time, these monies could become interchangeable with dollars. Still another suggestion offered in Congress was that we stop helping the European nations with the machinery and other things they needed most, and make them take our food and fiber surpluses instead.

None of these programs has been accepted. Everyone recognizes that at best they are useful only for a present emergency, and at worst may damage the growing agricultural base of the recipient nations.

We will hear more of this problem, for not only the farmers

but many of the rest of us have strong feelings about the waste of food. We were brought up to clean our plates when we ate. God's gifts were not to be wasted. So we feel acutely distressed when we hear about surplus coffee burned in Brazil, cabbages, oranges or fish thrown into the sea to hold up prices, and fruit left to rot on the trees and potatoes in the ground.

Certainly no one can be happy with the present process, which seems to be that of stocking up warehouses to hold prices, contriving ways to give surpluses away, and then refilling the warehouses and repeating the process. We do not enjoy having decisions of this kind forced upon us. If this is what we have to do, we would like to know it in advance.

A few more constructive suggestions have been offered. One is to help the less industrialized nations build up industrially so that they can buy some of our surpluses. This process will also develop Europe so that it could resume some of its former purchases of food from us.³ Another suggestion is that instead of holding prices up on perishables by limitation of production or by storage, they should be allowed to drop to the point where the consumers will use more of them. The farmers would then be recompensed for their over-production by Treasury grants-in-aid which would help them keep some previous income levels.⁴ It is not yet clear quite how or for whose benefit actually this would operate.

In early 1950 Senator Brien McMahon made a suggestion that went beyond surpluses to the larger question of resource uses.⁵ If a disarmament treaty could be obtained that would cut our military budget of fifteen billion dollars by two-thirds, we should use ten billion dollars worth of the resources now devoted each year to military purposes to building up the less

3. Cp. The Bold New Program Series, Number 1, "A Policy and Program for Success," by Anderson and Raushenbush; and Number 7, "Foreign Aid and Our Economy," by Seymour E. Harris, Public Affairs Institute, Washington, D. C., 1950.

4. Statement by Secretary of Agriculture, Charles Brannan, April 7, 1949.

5. Statement of February 2, 1950.

developed areas of the world. In fact, the offer to give ten billion dollars for this purpose was to be a basic condition of the disarmament pact. In that direction, Senator McMahon thought, lay a real hope for peace. Presumably many of our food surpluses would become part of the proposed grants.

We have not as a people decided what will do the most good and the least harm in this situation where the rich gifts of nature and technology do not fit conveniently into our price system, while hunger and waste live side by side in this country and in the world.

3. *Land*

There are at least five other elements in our pattern of land use which need to be looked at long and hard.

A. First, we have let a large part of our basic resource be ruined. The Soil Conservation Service puts the total figure at one hundred and fifteen million acres of cropland (out of a total of three hundred and fifty million) that will have to be repaired and restored within the next 15 years, and another one hundred and fifteen million acres that will need restoration and treatment before the end of the next 30 years. Meanwhile, it thinks that we have lost as cropland for good about one hundred million acres. Some of that might be restored as pasture. These are big figures, and all subject to some dispute. But even allowing for a considerable margin of error, the statements are impressive. In the spring of 1950 the soil of the Great Plains that was torn up and put into wheat during the war began to blow, much as the soil of Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas did in 1935.

Our treatment of the land can be explained, but hardly justified. For years there was new land to be taken up. Old land consequently did not need to be kept up. Then the tenant farming system under which the tenant acquired no security or advantage from improving the land, pushed us along our dusty road. On top of this farm prices were so uncertain over a large part of our history that a farmer could never be sure

that the money he invested in soil conservation would pay off when the loans came due. The lack of low-cost credit tailored to conservation needs was until recent times also a factor in our process of destruction.

B. A second element in our present land situation is the effect of technology on our pattern of use. Efficiency requires equipment, and equipment requires capital. So we are moving toward large corporate land-farming. In California, Arizona and Texas it is the man or company with the biggest pumps who can drain out the underground water reservoirs, incidentally leaving his neighbors high, dry and bankrupt. The fight about Central Valley power and water in California is basically a fight about whether the family-sized farm and its way of life shall continue or not.

Technology is also threatening to dislocate the jobs of some half million farmers and farm workers in the cotton South. The flame cultivator and the mechanical cotton picker are cutting the demand for hand and back labor, and raising the demand for mechanics. Quite consciously the South is trying to shift into other forms of agriculture, and is having some success. However, over the next 20 years, a large part of these half million men, along with another two hundred thousand that will come from the coal mines, will have to be absorbed by the rest of our resource world.

C. A third element is the miserable life of a considerable number of people who earn their living from the land. The migratory workers of the West are the most conspicuous of these groups. They are needed badly in the vegetable, fruit and sugar beet areas, but we have not found a way of fitting in our needs for them at certain crucial times of the year with ways in which they can have a proper family life, decent living quarters when on the move, adequate schooling for the children, and an opportunity for them to earn a living when agriculture does not need them.

Another group is made up of the men and women on the ruined small farms of our Appalachian chain. They exist on subsistence farms. Corn, which is an eater of the soil, is often their only cash crop, and its growth ruins the soil and seems necessary at the same time. If we had some pattern of co-operative land management that would let some of the poorer farms be put together in these areas, perhaps something could be made of their land. Most experts, however, talk of helping them move off the land into industry or services as the only possibility of increasing their standard of living.

D. A fourth element in our land situation is our policy of bringing new land under the plow. We have been opening up the arid lands of the West through irrigation for many years. Today the cost of building the dams, the power plants to pump water to the dry land, and the cost of the ditches has been moving up rapidly. In the Missouri Basin the average investment per acre of new land may be \$300, and on some projects it may approach \$1,000 an acre.

These investments will probably all be returned in time, and they do a great deal toward developing the wealth and income of the areas where they are located. They are of great national benefit, and increase the resource base. Still, when that is said, a question remains as to what the limits should be. If three acres of eroding land in the East or South can be restored to full fertility for \$150 and together can produce as much as one acre of land in the West that requires a loan of \$300 or \$500 or \$1,000, where can the nation best invest its funds? And if the new land in either area is to be devoted to sugar beets, wheat or cotton, which are subsidized, just how much advantage is there in creating additional surpluses?

E. A fifth element has to do with our present policy of endowing some of our farm land with rights and privileges at the expense of the young people who want to become farmers. As a result of our attempts to limit crop production we have



We have been opening up the arid lands of the West through irrigation for many years. Above, the All-American Canal, part of the Boulder Canyon project, winds through lands made productive by its life-giving cargo, water.

developed a system of acreage allotment, based on past use. These allotments go on from year to year, and it is only the crops grown on them that are protected by government price supports. The result is that in tobacco, for example, where there are two adjacent fields with soil that acts exactly alike, and smells and feels the same, one of them will cost the newcomer \$500 an acre, and the other \$50. A large part of the benefit of our farm price support is being absorbed by highly capitalized land values. The young man who has to buy land at \$500 an acre in order to get the allotment stands far less chance of coming out solvent than his grandfather did. We may be against titles of nobility for our people, but we are not against enabling the historical accidents of our land use with special prerequisites and privileges.

We ought to be able to find some way to solve our agricultural crises without at the same time letting our national funds be used in this way.

4. *The Range Lands*

We eat more meat than anybody except the Australasians. Much of that meat gets started on the range lands of the West. These are still largely under government ownership. They make up the watersheds of some important rivers. Over a period of years, government leases to use the range have been traded in freely and values have gone up. Using a different device than acreage allotments we have achieved the same result of raising land values—even on public land.

But the consequence is that whenever there is a move by government men to cut down over-grazing and stop erosion, and to conserve the range, the protests of the lease-holders rise to the skies—naturally, since the biggest success of their enterprise is based on full use of the range. The men of the Forest Service and of the Office of Land Management are then hauled before Congress as so many traitors to private interest. Any prolonged drought in the West will make the issue of range conservation versus immediate returns a major one.

Constructively, some experiments with reseeding of the range with hardier grasses have been carried on and hold promise. Less constructively, parts of the cattle industry have advanced the proposition that the public range lands should be ceded to the states and then be given to present holders of the leases. Not only the past record of indifference toward range conservation, but the fact that some watersheds overlap state lines and state ownerships would prevent really effective watershed control, work against this proposal.

5. *Forests*

The price of housing for young people reflects today our past disregard of forest conservation. After OPA regulations went off, lumber prices shot up far beyond the average of all

other wholesale prices. By the end of 1950 we will have paid about two billion dollars more for lumber in the post-war years than we would have if it had gone up no more than the average of other wholesale prices.

The story of our forests is an unpleasant one. Part of the nation's forests were acquired privately by fraud. Many of them were clear-cut without any thought of replanting. Ghost towns and migratory labor rather than settled communities were the rule. For long years conservation was hardly thought of.

With our growing economy—and it may reach a national income of five hundred billion dollars by the year 2000—we will want to use a great many lumber products, if only we can afford them. But, according to the U.S. Forest Service, even if we were able today to obtain good forest practices throughout the whole country, it would be 45 years before we could catch up with our saw-timber demand.

We were able to salvage in the early 1900's, through Gifford Pinchot and Theodore Roosevelt, some national forests. These cover seventy-three million acres out of a total of three hundred and forty-five million. Where access roads have been built, the lumbering on them is good. Without these access roads, trees grow too old for cutting, waste and rot. But there seem to be enough private interests at stake in not having these national forests opened up and competing with the others to prevent several from having the access roads which are necessary.

The conservation practices in most of our private forest lands are not good. The Forest Service holds that the cutting on 64 per cent of them is "poor" or "destructive." Some states have established a few conservation levels, but they are in a competitive situation with other states which have not done so, and the results leave much to be desired.

We may need twice our present cuttings—seventy-two billion board feet by the year 2000, instead of thirty-six billion. There is no good evidence that we are going to be able to get it, or get it at a reasonable price. Nor is there even any great popular

movement that is attempting to force a national decision on whether our past and present pattern of forest use should be changed. Not even those who have seen their city water supplies ruined by overcutting in the watershed, or have noticed the dams silting up, seem to be really concerned about the matter.

6. *Water and Land*

In spite of the fact that the people of this country often do things on a grand scale, it is only recently that they have begun to recognize that resources cannot be tackled on a piece-meal basis. There is a unity of sorts to nature, and it is not enough to hack at one part of it without considering the effects on the whole.

One recent illustration of doing things in backward fashion is found in the Missouri Basin. Four years after the flood con-



Even with good forest practices, it would be 45 years before we could catch up with our saw-timber demand. Above, year old Pines set in contour furrows in Barrien County, Michigan. The area at the left suffered from a fire.

trol and navigation agency (Army Engineers Corps) and the irrigation agency (Bureau of Reclamation) had met head-on in competition for control of the Missouri river, and after Congress had approved their joint plans for spending and investing some four billion dollars, then, and then only, did the Department of Agriculture come in and say: "You have been leaving out soil, range and forest conservation. It is an essential part of watershed control." An additional three billion, one hundred million dollars was to be added to the bill for these purposes.

This way of going at things makes little sense. It has been severely criticized by the Hoover Commission among others, and proposals have been made that there must be advance coordination at the White House level before the plans of any single agency go before Congress for authorization of appropriation. These proposals are a blow at the log-rolling which has kept river, harbor and irrigation projects moving along without adequate consideration of ultimate benefits or costs.

Some of our greatest resource controversies center around land and water use patterns. Out West, where water is a basic ingredient of wealth, practically a cold war exists between Arizona and California over rights to Colorado River water. Each state knows that its growth will be limited if it fails to get all the water it claims. The controversy arose out of an overestimate in the early 1920's by distinguished engineers of the amount of water actually in the river from year to year. Then there were several disputes about what the states had compacted to do. Meanwhile, new land was brought in freely to reap rich rewards during and after the war, and in every drought the water table was lowered more.

Some long years of lawsuits are apparently involved before the controversy is settled. In any case a large governmental loan (about eight hundred million dollars) is needed before Arizona, if it wins, can obtain use of the water. Without that loan, its rights would be comparatively worthless.

Meanwhile, for lack of adequate upstream soil protection a great deal of silt is collecting in Lake Mead, behind Hoover Dam. In time the proposed upstream dams will get that silt.

A series of major questions were not answered before the Missouri River development was begun in the middle 1940's, and those questions will plague the people of the region and Congress for some time to come. It was not decided at the time Congress authorized the combined program of the Army Engineers Corps and the Bureau of Reclamation how much water the river would be called upon to give for irrigation, navigation and sanitation. There is doubt that it can fill all the demands made upon it. The answer depends on whether the Army Engineers will try to create a twelve-foot navigation channel to Sioux City (like that of the rest of the Ohio-Mississippi system), or will be satisfied with a nine-foot channel. The answer depends also on whether the farmers of the Dakotas will want to change from dry land wheat farming to irrigated farming on a smaller land base.

These uncertain elements also affect the costs (unless, through Congress, the nation is willing to pay any kind of a bill). If a half or a third of the farmers prefer not to irrigate (and they get enough rain in four years out of ten, and a fair amount in three other years), then the costs of the dams and major works will be very large indeed for the other farmers. Both navigation and irrigation make demands on the river and reservoir system only during part of the year. During the rest of the year, water has to be hoarded. Therefore, irregular electric power is produced, which is worth much less than regular or firm power. This is important because power from the dams is supposed to help the farmers pay off their loans. Unless that power can be firmed up through steam plants, it will be difficult for power to perform its helpful financial task. Yet a proposal for a government-owned steam plant to perform exactly this kind of function in California has been defeated for several years.

After pointing out these difficulties, it should be noted that on the Tennessee a well-thought out plan was carried through, with the benefit of lower construction costs in the 1930's than are now possible. There were no irrigation problems to conflict with navigation interests. On the Columbia, except for some original disputes about control of dam sites on the upper river and some disputes about the fate of the salmon, things have gone much better than on the Colorado or Missouri. Speculation in the lands that are to be irrigated near Coulee Dam was largely stopped by law before it got started. This was one of our few successful efforts to help the man who is going to cultivate the land himself acquire it under conditions where he can prosper.

7. Water for Cities, Farms and Power

The water distress of New York City in 1950 has sharpened the nation's picture of water shortages. That city's emergency seems to be due to a miscalculation about the amount of water that air-cooling systems would use up, and another about the amount of waste that would occur in the absence of meters. Plenty of water exists for New York City to tap at distances that the people of the West would consider very short indeed. Its emergency is not a permanent one.

Water has been taken for granted in the East as cheap, practically free. But like clean air, it is not free. People in Pittsburgh, Los Angeles and other big cities find that it costs them money for transportation to get away from the city fumes and live where there is fresh, clean air. Similarly, water is going to be less and less cheap. Industries and air-cooling are using up more of it all the time. In a series of cities in the East industrial growth has practically stopped. There is no more water for new plants.

In parts of the East and Middle West the water table has been dropping for some time, and the farms there are, off and on, experiencing some of the hardships of the arid West.

We do not know exactly what is happening in these areas, or whether geophysical explorations can tap old underlying stream beds for them. This uncertainty has led the National Conservation Foundation, under Fairfield Osborn, to pioneer a badly needed study of the water situation. This and other problems will be taken up by an Emergency Water Policy Commission, headed by Morris Llewellyn Cooke. It has been asked to go into all our great water problems and to suggest a policy by December, 1950.

One of the major problems of New England is whether it can get enough low-cost power to resume its interrupted industrial growth. That seems now to depend on whether satisfactory arrangements can be made with New York State or with the Federal Government, whichever ultimately operates the great power plants that have been discussed for the St. Lawrence. This is a resource that has been going to waste for many years. Canada is willing to go along with the whole development. The Lake States, which would be shaken somewhat if our growing imports of high-grade foreign ores result in the location of more steel plants on the coasts, want a canal to let them get that foreign iron ore too. New York State now seems willing to confine its interest only to the power development. A see-saw of sectional interests, plus increasing costs, have held up the whole development. The states which would benefit from low-cost energy do not know whether they ever will have the opportunity.

In the Southeast and in the Oklahoma-Arkansas part of the Southwest, there are still many smaller rivers where hydro power has not yet been fully mastered. In developments such as these, flood control and navigation are partners in interest, and the river controls are not undertaken unless the government finances a part of the structures.

Power is expected to pay its share of the investment out of its revenues. Much of the debate in these areas centers around the question of whether the power from the rivers is to be

allowed to go directly over government lines to the cities and cooperatives for resale by them, or whether it is to be turned over to the private utility companies at the dams. There is also much private opposition to the construction of public steam-plants to firm up and make more saleable the power generated on the rivers as a result of government investment.

On all these rivers there is a lingering question about whether the navigation interests justify the very large Federal grant that is involved in them. The local shippers get a direct and considerable advantage. However, the railroads then usually lower their rates to stay in competition with the barges. Then the railroads have to get raises on freight rates in the other areas to make good their losses. The taxpayers and the shippers located away from water pay the bill. No adequate study has been made of the ultimate national advantages of this type of procedure and resource use.

8. Minerals and Fuels

The two wars of the first half of this century have eaten deeply into many of our mineral reserves. A growing peace-time economy can be expected to chew up additional vast quantities of ore. We will have to rely more and more on imports from other areas, and they will not be as low in price as they have been over the past years. The days of very cheap foreign labor are coming to an end.

We are left with a real problem about subsidizing or closing down marginal (high-cost) mines in this country. In an emergency when ocean shipments are stopped, we will need these mines. Yet, if we really thought a war was coming, it would make more sense to stockpile ores or metal, and to hold as reserves the richer mines that require less labor for production than the high-cost mines.

The increasing reliance on foreign ores, particularly the high quality iron ores of Labrador, Venezuela and Brazil that are expected to take the place of the Mesabi Range in our heavy metals economy, will tend to pull this industry toward the

coasts. This will not ruin the Lake States, for the vast supplies of low-grade iron ore left in Minnesota are subject to improvement and use. Still, the development may be as upsetting as the forcing out of half a million men from the cotton fields by the mechanical cotton picker, tractor, and flame cultivator.

Our fuel picture is a composite of coal, petroleum and natural gas. We have plenty of coal for steam-raising purposes, but our good coking coal is coming to an end. It is an end that has been foreseen for many years, but we have never gotten around to restricting the short supply only to coking, and to stopping its use for other purposes.

The coal industry, in post-war years, has been getting high prices. Wages have increased greatly, and this fact has worked to mechanize the mines. More and more men are being forced out of the industry. Oil and natural gas—which are in limited supply—are taking the place of coal. In some cases they are cheaper. Usually they are less subject to interrupted supply. For householders they are more convenient. The coal industry can probably supply all its remaining markets on a four-day working week.

In the offing is another use for coal, as a raw material for petroleum. Oil shale will also be used in the same way. Present pilot plants indicate a production cost for gasoline that is somewhat higher than gasoline from petroleum, but if and when the oil industry raises its gasoline prices and the synthetic processes cut costs a little, the new product might come into use.

Inside the fuel industry are various pulls and pressures. One group, with foreign holdings, believes in importing oil and not using up our own limited reserves. Another group, without foreign holdings, disagrees. (The same dispute goes on between two of the large groups in copper, but revolves about a tariff policy.) One group, which includes natural gas holdings in its oil reserves, wants to see natural gas used widely. Others, without such reserves, do not favor this.

The people, represented by the government, have an enormous interest in maintaining an adequate and relatively low-cost fuel base. High raw material prices reflect themselves in high transportation costs and in the prices of manufactured articles. Already the exploration for oil and gas is aided by various tax advantages. The coal industry which, like agriculture, is made up of many small units, was aided by the government in the pre-war period through minimum price controls. The fall in coal sales means great hardships for the coal regions, and the mechanization process means that other work must be available for the men leaving the mines.

We have been relying on the price system to bring an order of sorts—what some people call “a natural order”—out of the competition of our three basic fuels. The government steps in only during emergencies, to aid coal by sanctioning minimum price controls, to aid oil by tax advantages and measures that are part conservation and part price controls, and to regulate parts of the natural gas industry as a public utility. But it has never tried to piece together an over-all fuel supply system that would protect us if we stop finding many new oil or natural gas deposits. By pushing coal out of the way, and using our oil and gas as freely as we are doing, we may possibly be racing into the same scarcity and high-price situation for the next generation that we have already reached in lumber products.

Instead of thinking along these lines, we are in fact going the other way. In March, 1950, both Houses of Congress, by a narrow majority repealed enough of the controls on the price of natural gas at the wells to allow an extra charge to consumers over the years of from two billion to four billion dollars on the forty-two trillion cubic feet of reserves affected. The President, however, vetoed the bill.

CONFLICTS AND PROGRESS

To outline, even briefly, some of our major resource problems, is to indicate the conflicts between short-run and long-run interests. It may pay an individual very well immediately to ignore forest conservation practices. It does not pay the people of the country over the years to have him do that. The price system does not always provide for the future.

In trying to find solutions to some of these major problems we do well to keep in mind two responsibilities; one is toward those whose standard of living and opportunity for development is far below our own. Our resource patterns should help raise their standards. The other responsibility is toward our children who should not be forced to live a more barren or difficult life than our own, because we have run riotously through our resources and ruined their base. Finding ways of efficient engineering to make our resources meet these two objectives is a major task.

Every student of resource use will have his own more or less helpful suggestions. Here, for consideration, are a few:

Surpluses

In regard to surpluses, all give-away proposals must be recognized as temporary, and not basically helpful to us or to the farm development of other areas. In case of famine, even in China, I think we ought to give them some of the stored food and not be overly righteous about it either. Our churches have not yet accepted the idea that it is proper to starve heretics to death.

Basically, to solve our surplus problem we must make it more possible to move men from the farms into industry and to shift production from the less-needed crops to others. Meanwhile, it does not seem unreasonable to find out by a short trial whether and how much the poorer people of the country, and those on the farms, would benefit from letting food prices drop. Some payments would be made to farmers in exchange for the advantages to the consumers. But we

should, at the same time, find out whether the same amount of money the trial costs could not give greater advantages if it were used for the farmers in other ways.

Land and Forests

For land and forests, we have an obligation to make it possible for farmers to afford conservation measures. In another place I have proposed a Natural Resources Corporation to extend conservation credits at very low costs and on especially tailored terms to the people affecting land and forest use.⁶ But once it has been made economically possible for them to undertake conservation measures, and if they should then fail to do so, I am inclined to believe that the interest of both present and future generations must be protected by a national mandate placing the obligations of stewardship on the owners of these resources.

Second in importance is a fairly complete revision of our system of tenant farming, under which the tenant gains no immediate benefit and perhaps even loses some security of tenure as a reward for any efforts he may make to improve and conserve the soil. Nor does he share the benefits of government aid to agriculture as he should. It is possible to improve greatly his situation and his responsibility.

The protection and improvement of public range lands under the Federal Government should be continued and expanded since the need for steady water supplies and prevention of erosion should be clear to all. I do not see how individual states or ranchers can give adequate assurance that this resource base will not be neglected or ruined by them.

Watershed Programs

In regard to watershed programs that involve divergent purposes, neither the present nor future generations can benefit by the parochial and competitive efforts of several agencies. Sometime before the Hoover Commission reported,

6. Stephen Raushenbush, "Our Conservation Job," Public Affairs Institute, 312 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Washington, D.C. 50¢



Proper national policies can encourage the farmer to employ conservation. Above, an Ohio farm in cooperation with the Extension Service demonstrates contour and strip farming. Four fields can be seen in this picture, showing the complete rotation of corn-wheat-meadow-meadow.

I suggested that a sifting of all plans and differences long before they reached the stage of action was necessary, and that a National Watershed Review Board should be established to do this job. The Hoover Commission recommended similar action and also proposed to put the functions of the Army engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation into a new Resource Department. This still leaves out the soil and forest conservation agencies which are in the Department of Agriculture.

Steps along these lines would help greatly. They do not quite settle the debate now going on in both the Missouri and Columbia basins about a government corporation with single responsibility, but with power to call on all the expertness of the Federal services. The successful TVA has become the center of that debate. The debate poses one of the major problems of a democracy: How can a complicated and wide-

spread industrial society secure responsible participation of all citizens in the important decisions of their lives? For me, valley authorities would be permanently valuable not only in more adequate resource use and conservation, but in giving the citizens of the areas more participation than they now have in the developments which will profoundly affect their future. If these authorities could be set up to provide great local participation, they would be superior to the combined-competitive approach of a series of separate agencies. On the Missouri, the case seems clear that a new look and a new management is needed.⁷ The Emergency Water Policy Commission is expected to report on this matter next winter.

Minerals

In regard to minerals, our responsibilities clearly do not end with an inventory of what we have or bigger attempts to discover more, although both those programs are valuable. If we are to draw an important part of our mineral strength from abroad in the future, we should ask both our American companies and the United Nations to help see that these resources are not obtained in any way we would be ashamed of personally. The exploitation of Africans or Latin Americans may make us rich, but it will make us neither strong nor proud.

Fuel

In regard to the fuel complex discussed earlier, it seems time for the President to do, not what he did on an organizational level with the appointment of the Hoover Commission, but what he did with the appointment of the Water Policy Board. Problems exist here which management and unions working in the industries ought to be called upon to help solve. A policy which will protect us against shortages and high prices ought to be hammered out, and that policy ought to give men in all the fuel industries better security than they now have.

Progress is possible along these directions.

7. Hoover Commission, Appendix L. *Report of the Natural Resources Task Force*. Also "The Big Missouri," Public Affairs Institute.

OUR WORLD RESPONSIBILITIES

Two world movements are underway which require us to re-examine our patterns of resource use and the life that comes from them. One is the great urge of the less developed two-thirds of the world to secure a better living. The other is the push and power of authoritarian communism, based in large measure on its promise to give both a better living and freedom from insecurity.

The Challenge of Two World Movements

If these two movements start going hand-in-hand, as they have already done in China and Eastern Europe, the opportunity for the great mass of the people of the world to achieve most of the Christian values will be gone. Since the majority of the people in those areas already live under hierarchical systems, and since much of their experience with the free West has been embittered by exploitation and racism, some very unusual efforts on our part will be required to save and develop that opportunity. Otherwise, communism can, and quite possibly will, become their religion.



The "Christmas Tree" of gauges and valves over the casing head of a well controls the amount of crude oil allowed to flow from producing rock formation. The "Tree" symbolizes the problem of achieving a national policy adequate for the long term development and conservation of natural resources.

(Photo by Corsini; Standard Oil Co., N.J.)

Why has our democratic system, with its efforts to approach Christian ideals, not developed a dynamic power and appeal of greater strength than that which communism now offers to underprivileged peoples and nations? This may turn out to be the most significant mystery of the century. At one time Christianity appealed only to the underprivileged groups.

Each of us must try to find his own answer to that question. In discussions with scientists and other men of the underdeveloped areas I gather an impression that we appear to them as people airily convinced of our own superiority, absorbed in our gadgetry, cursed by our unsolved racism at home, excited by our new power in the world, without moral discipline, without humility, and sharp in our insistence that our money power can and should buy their allegiance. Let us write off half of that impression; let us exempt our missionaries from it. Enough still remains to indicate our difficulty in crusading for freedom and God.

The freedom of action and thought that means so much to us, means little to the peoples of most underdeveloped areas. They have not had it, do not know it, are not sure what good would come from it. The security against unemployment, starvation and disease which they need, we cannot yet give them. The improvement in the standard of living which has been reasonably steady with us is something which we have not yet offered them. Instead of challenging the hierarchy of political and economic power that oppresses them, we rapidly come to terms with it. Nor have we shown them the better side of our economic arrangements—the cooperatives, the farm loaning arrangements, the rural resettlement work, the social security provisions, or the values that come when men work together as friends to accomplish great social goals.

The Social Gap Between America and Underdeveloped Areas

Any attempt to explain why democracy has today so little appeal to great numbers of people in underdeveloped parts of

the world must face the difference between the ordinary social and economic arrangements of their life and ours. A sense of brotherhood with underprivileged peoples is not created by indifference. Nor is it achieved by domestic or international charity. It is only obtainable when people have a profound conviction that poverty, insecurity and degradation of the human spirit must be abolished, and by close cooperation between poor peoples and more fortunate ones. Without the establishment of such a bond of brotherhood, no further Christian or democratic values are likely to be accepted.

Perhaps most of us do not have the necessary profound conviction as to the urgency of reform. We are content to let our own impoverished groups and those in other lands struggle along, only very gradually improving their conditions as economic wealth grows under present institutional arrangements, rather than seek action in keeping with the desperate circumstances of human existence in these areas. For the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the difference between gradualism and urgent reform may mean that of a standard of living rising from perhaps \$75 a year to \$85 in the next fifty years, and one doubling itself in that time. The gap between the two is large enough for a major social revolution to enter.

An authoritarian force taking control in these underdeveloped areas could possibly double the standard of living within fifty years. It would use powers which other governing groups would never assume. Dispossessing the landed groups and abolishing land rents alone would go far toward doubling the economic returns to the peasants. Compulsory labor with complete power to move workers where most needed could result in fairly rapid construction of vast public improvements and industries. These seem to us highly undesirable means. But it is far from certain that a ruthless authoritarian use of human and natural resources could not improve the economic condition of these people greatly after some time. We should not under-rate the possibility.

This constitutes a challenge to responsible men and women. The challenge may seem far away, but it is not. Put bluntly, if we fail to meet it, we may be forced to increase military expenditures and consequently have less funds for social welfare and education in this country.

The Opportunity Open for a Few Remaining Years

To see that our resource pattern is sufficiently improved to aid our own lagging groups is not enough. This would be a great achievement and would give us a moral strength and confidence in our dealings with other peoples which we now lack. But it would not in itself save and use the opportunity which is open for a few remaining years to freedom and other Christian values in the rest of the world. To save and use that opportunity we will have to offer not only the advantages of our technology and capital resources but genuine brotherhood.

Agricultural Production, Price and Income Policy*

AMERICAN agriculture is a full and essential partner in both national and world economies. Although less than 20 per cent of the nation's population are currently engaged in agricultural production, their production, their prices and their income are of vital concern to all consumers of food and fibre, both in America and abroad. This includes everybody.

The issues at stake are economic, political and social. They are also in fundamental ways ethical and spiritual. Therefore, the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches affirms

*This official statement was adopted on February 12, 1950 by the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches on recommendation of its Agricultural Relations Department. Communications concerning the statement should be addressed to Rev. Shirley E. Greene, Agricultural Relations Secretary, Council for Social Action, Merom, Indiana.

the following views and policies in respect to agricultural production, price and income:

We believe that in our American economic system any adequate solution to the problems of commercial agriculture lies a) in the maintenance of a high level of production and employment in the economy as a whole; b) in a satisfactory allocation of our economic resources; and c) in an equitable distribution of purchasing power throughout the economy. We call upon all sectors of our economy to bend their best efforts toward attaining these goals.

We also recognize the need for international policies which will be conducive to the development of underdeveloped areas, a balance between population and resources, and a relatively free flow of agricultural and other commodities in channels of international trade.

In the recurring cycles of prosperity and depression, agriculture has historically plunged first and fastest and furthest into the troughs, always to the detriment of the whole community. Therefore, we believe that the federal government has been right in its policy of seeking an effective program which will help to overcome unduly low and sharply fluctuating prices and incomes in agriculture. Such a program, if it is economically sound and effectively administered, will be both just and in the public interest.

We recommend to the Congress, to the national farm organizations, and to the public the following guiding objectives in the formulation of production and income programs for commercial agriculture. These objectives we believe to be both economically and ethically sound.

GUIDING OBJECTIVES

1. The program should be conducive to conservation of land, water and forest resources.

The earth was created by God and given into the possession of man for the sustenance of the generations. Stewardship, translated into resource conservation, is a first demand of the Christian conscience and a first requirement of economic survival.

2. The program should permit and encourage efficient allocation and use of natural, economic and human resources.

Conservation is meaningless without use. The Christian principle of

stewardship implies and demands, both in private practice and in public policy, that conservation and efficient use shall complement each other.

3. The program should lead to organized, sustained and realistic abundance in production within a framework of sound conservation practice.

The primary "calling" of the farmer is to produce food and fibre for the uses of mankind. The purposes of God in creation and the normal desires of farmers themselves combine to demand a program which encourages full production up to the point where the needs of all men, women and children of the world for diet, clothing and shelter are generously met.

4. The program should encourage efficient processing and distribution with no more than reasonable and equitable margins of profit for processors and distributors.

It is futile to encourage full agricultural production if inefficiency, waste and profiteering exist between the farm and the ultimate consumer, forcing consumer costs up and producer incomes down. A satisfactory program must encourage efficiency and must provide a close governmental check on monopolistic practices which lead to excessive margins of profit in agricultural processing and distribution. Continued public and private support of the Cooperative movement will aid materially in such a program.

5. The program should provide adequate protection against unduly low and sharply fluctuating farm prices and incomes.

In the past, farmers have produced to full capacity and taken whatever price the competitive market would offer. Industry, on the other hand, has been better able to control production and price in the interest of maximum profit. This situation lies at the heart of the chronically low and sharply fluctuating peace-time income of agriculture as experienced in the '20's and '30's. The program must put the government in a position to assist agriculture in protecting itself against the severe downward pressures and the unpredictable fluctuations which have traditionally deprived the farmer of an adequate or equitable income.

6. The program should perpetuate the pattern of efficient, owner-operated family farming.

The stability of the family is a central concern of both the Christian view of life and the democratic way. In the face of the growth of great industrialized farms on the one hand and the existence of thousands of uneconomic, small farms on the other, a satisfactory farm program must not only defend but positively aid the perpetuation of efficient, owner-operated family farms.

7. The program should be democratic in administration, susceptible to change in the light of changing economic conditions, and accompanied by only such governmental controls as are necessary to provide equity to farmers and protection to the public interest.

Christianity and democracy agree in asserting the dignity and worth of the individual and his right to freedom. We believe, however, that both man's dignity and his freedom must be achieved within a framework of social responsibility. To provide for such achievement, our farm program must a) allow and encourage democratic participation by farmers and others directly affected; and b) provide for the expression of the will of the people regarding desirable changes as economic conditions change. Government controls should be kept at a minimum consistent with sound administration. On the other hand, if farmers are to receive benefits from government programs, they must in justice be prepared to accept commensurate regulations and controls.

In conclusion, we call attention that any agricultural program aimed at protecting prices and income of commercial farmers will utterly fail to meet the needs of almost half the American farmers, that half who operate outside and below the commercial channels, who have very few resources per farm and who have virtually nothing to sell at any price. Nor will this program meet the needs of farm laborers. For both these groups additional governmental programs are essential. The Council for Social Action will direct its attention to the needs of this sector of the agricultural population in another statement.

We earnestly call upon our fellow Christians of the Congregational Christian churches and of all other communions to study these issues and to support these policies whenever and wherever they can in good conscience do so.

On To Action

In the final judgment the sheep will be separated from the goats on the basis of what they have done to conserve human life and resources. Some will be promoted because they fed the hungry, clothed the naked and housed the strangers. Others will be sent away because they did not recognize the need of their brethren as the need of the Lord. Who are the "least of these" in our time if not the million migratory farm laborers who harvest our crops but wander homeless about the land? And who are they who heed their distress?

Congressmen know that migratory farm workers seldom establish the residential requirements for voting. No lobby in Washington represents their interests. No union or farm organization adequately expresses their needs. No price support programs or credit corporations serve them. They seldom receive the community services provided for health, recreation, employment and relief. Even the camps for migrants built by the federal government before the war, were put on sale by an economy-minded Congress.

But there were church social action committee members who could not eat or sleep until these migratory people were employed and sheltered. They cried aloud to the community authorities and to the federal government. They formed a national council of agencies interested in migrant welfare. They insisted upon federal responsibility for migrant camps until it was written into the housing legislation that they should be reconditioned and properly supervised. It may even be possible to build new houses by the thousands to rent to these pickers of the crops. As one California Senator wrote me, "The successful outcome of this effort is indeed gratifying. It becomes one of the initial milestones passed on the road of social progress in behalf of our minority groups in agriculture."

"When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in?" Comes the answer, "When you demanded justice for migrants in your church assemblies, your city council meetings and your Congressional committee hearings."

Ray Gibbons